



2010-2011 Montgomery County Deer Donation Program

Year-End Summary

Background

In response to a 2004 landowner survey revealing the increasing environmental, health, safety and economic problems caused by the overpopulation of white-tailed deer, the Montgomery County Department of Economic Development and other County departments developed and implemented new deer-related initiatives and expanded existing deer monitoring and management programs. The DED Agricultural Services Division has been working with various agencies within Montgomery County as part of this County-wide deer management effort.

Initiatives

Two main initiatives are helping farmers and landowners overcome the problems caused by white-tailed deer. First, Deer Management Workshops (like the upcoming February 28 Quality Deer Management Lecture Series) are designed to educate farmers, hunters, landowners, and the general public about effective deer management on private property. Second, the *Deer Donation Program* encourages farmers and hunters to harvest more deer in a responsible manner by providing local, minimum-hassle deer collection sites, of which there are two in Montgomery County. The program is currently administered in partnership with Patriot Land and Wildlife Management Services (www.PatriotLWM.com), a local business that coordinates the collection, processing, and donation of venison to food banks in the local area.

Results

The 2010-2011 season as of February 22nd, 2011 resulted in 401 deer being donated by Montgomery County hunters. 2 cold box locations (1 in Poolesville, 1 in Laytonsville) allowed hunters from throughout the County easy access to the *Deer Donation Program*. Hunters were required to properly tag, field dress, and check-in their deer per Department of Natural Resources requirements. Hunters were also required to fill out a donation log, containing general contact information and information about their particular deer. Weekly, Patriot Land and Wildlife Management Services removed donated deer from the cold boxes and transported them in a covered trailer to a butcher in Towson, MD. From there, the butcher would process the deer, wrapping and deep freezing the venison meat. Patriot LWM would then transport that processed venison to the Capital Area Food Bank in Washington, D.C., where it was donated to help feed the hungry and homeless in the Metropolitan area.

The *Deer Donation Program* has invested \$140,000 over 7 years. The value of the Program is calculated to be upwards of \$255,000. This is based on the value of the meat collected (49,080 lbs at \$2/lb) and the value of the crops not consumed from agricultural fields (1,227 deer harvested, 2,000 lbs of grain saved for each deer harvested (2,454,000 lbs.), value of grain estimated at \$3.671/bushel). Typically, an adult deer can consume 1.5 tons of forage per year (crops, landscape ornamentals, and other habitat). This equates to a savings of up to 1,840.5 tons (3,681,000 lbs) of forage saved since the Program's inception in 2004.

Montgomery County Deer Donation Program (To-Date)				
Season	Deer Donated	LBS. Venison	Forage Saved (tons)	Pop. Reduction Equiv.
2004-2005 Season	39 deer	1,560 pounds	58.5	117
2005-2006 Season	51 deer	2,040 pounds	76.5	153
2006-2007 Season	85 deer	3,400 pounds	127.5	255
2007-2008 Season	197 deer	7,880 pounds	295.5	591
2008-2009 Season	150 deer	6,000 pounds	225	450
2009-2010 Season	304 deer	12,160 pounds	456	912
2010-2011 Season	401 deer	16,040 pounds	601.5	1,203
TOTALS	1,227 deer	49,080 pounds	1,840.5 tons	3,681 deer

Deer Donation Program (2010-2011)
401 deer donated
Population reduction equivalent for 2011 = up to 1,203 deer
601.5 actual tons of forage saved - - - 1804.5 potential tons of forage saved for 2011



As can be seen from the resulting figures, the *Deer Donation Program* has been nothing short of a success for Montgomery County and its farmers, hunters, landowners, and residents. Not only has the population of whitetail deer been better managed through hunter access to a donation program, it has resulted in significant economic loss reductions of crops and landscape ornamentals due to deer damage, benefitting farmers and landowners alike. The *Deer Donation Program* also gives hunters who don't have the freezer space for multiple deer to continue hunting throughout the year.

Since its creation in 2004, the *Deer Donation Program* has grown exponentially each year over 7 hunting seasons. This can be attributed to factors such as better publicity of the Program and active involvement and funding from a variety of stakeholders, and the realization of the need for a better managed deer herd County-wide, resulting in an overall higher quality deer herd which attracts more hunters. The effect of the *Deer Donation Program* undoubtedly has other less-considered influences, like the reduction in deer vs. vehicle collisions and less cases of Lyme disease in Montgomery County.

Doe Donation Contests

For the 2010-2011 Hunting Season, a *Doe Donation Contest* was developed through the assistance of the DED Agricultural Services Division, the Montgomery County Farm Bureau, Bass Pro Shops (www.Basspro.com), the Western Chesapeake Watershed Branch of the Quality Deer Management Association (www.WCWBQDMA.com), and Patriot Land and Wildlife Management Services (www.PatriotLWM.com). The purpose of the *Doe Donation Contest* was to raise awareness of the need for reduction of female deer populations, as well as promote the *Deer Donation Program*. The hunters that donated the most female deer harvested in Montgomery County received some great prizes from the above sponsors.

Female deer (does) are the cornerstones of a whitetail deer population, and currently outnumber the amount of male deer (bucks) exponentially in this area. Ideally, a healthy deer herd would maintain a 2:1 doe:buck sex ratio. Urban-fringe areas throughout Maryland, including Montgomery County, maintain closer to a 5 or 6:1 doe:buck sex ratio. By promoting the harvest of does through a doe incentive program, hunters can begin to improve the sex ratio of the overall herd, while also reducing total herd numbers to better suit the land's overall carrying capacity (the ability of the environment to sustain a population of deer, given the available food, water, and habitat).

Utilizing the *Doe Donation Contest*, hunters not only reduced the *actual* amount of deer in the County, but reduced the *potential* amount of deer, considering that female deer are the breeders and are capable of having twins and even triplets each year. Simply, harvesting 1 deer of higher reproductive potential (adult doe) is more effective in population management than harvesting 1 deer of lower (yearling doe) or no reproductive potential (buck), although the exact same amount of effort is expended in each case. Harvesting 1 buck removes 1 deer from the overall population; harvesting 1 adult doe that would have potentially had triplets in Spring 2011 removes 4 deer from the overall population. This is known as the population reduction equivalent (see previous chart), and the *Deer Donation Program* is responsible for a population reduction equivalent of up to 1,203 deer in Montgomery County in 2010-2011. The *Deer Donation Program* accepted deer of all sexes, but the *Donation Contests* were strictly limited to does.

There were several categories of the *Doe Donation Contest*, including overall contests of "Most Does Throughout the Season", "Most Does During the Firearms Season", "Youth Overall", and several weekly contests. Bass Pro Shops of Hanover, MD provided 1st Place prizes in the Overall Contests, donating Wildlife Conservation Prints, hats, and Gift Cards to winners. Patriot LWM Outdoors provided 2nd place prizes of \$50 Gift Cards to its Online Store (www.PatriotLWMOutdoors.com). The Western Chesapeake Watershed Branch of the Quality Deer Management Association (www.WCWBQDMA.com), a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to ensuring a high-quality and sustainable future for whitetail deer and whitetail deer hunting, provided 3rd place prizes of 1-Year Memberships to QDMA and QDMA t-shirts. In addition to the 3 Overall Contests, there were 10 Weekly Contests, funded through a generous \$1000 donation by the Montgomery County Farm Bureau. The \$1000 donation went towards purchasing Bass Pro Shops Gift Cards to be awarded during the 10 Weekly Contests. Overall, contest winners received an estimated \$1500 in prizes from the *Doe Donation Contests* (

Conclusion

The *Deer Donation Program* has been a wonderful and welcomed addition for farmers, hunters, and landowners in Montgomery County. The growth this program has experienced over the years speaks for itself and it would be difficult to find a similar program in Maryland that is as well supported, organized, and utilized as the *Deer Donation Program* in Montgomery County. Patriot Land and Wildlife Management Services would like to thank the Department of Economic Development, the Montgomery County Farm Bureau, the Western Chesapeake Watershed Branch of QDMA, Bass Pro Shops, and all the farmers, hunters, and landowners that participated or supported in the *Deer Donation Program* during the 2010-2011 season and helped it achieve another record year. We look forward to our continued work with the *Deer Donation Program* and many more successes in the future.



The 2010-2011 Doe Donation Contest Winners!



Paul Witt – Overall Contest Winner



Bob Turnbull



Phil Brower (Montgomery County Police)



Ryan Shope



Pat Musser – Firearms Winner



Dennis Benden (Montgomery County Park Police)



Bob Cissel



Fred Cissel



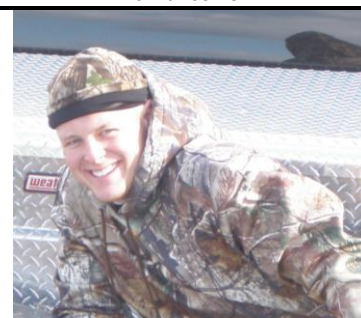
Chris Zoerner



Tyler Valentine (Youth Overall Winner) and his father John (weekly winner)



Steve Vallance



Bryan Ray

**Mike McGlaughlin (3rd place overall) not pictured*